

CONFORMITY AND NON-CONFORMITY.

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What are they? I am very much troubled with ignorance; some things that seem wonderfully clear to some people does not seem so clear to me. I find many things in the Bible that I cannot understand just in the same light that some others say is very plain to them, and in giving an explanation make it nearly as clear as the waters of the Missouri river. And among the things shrouded in mystery is the above subject. Newspapers and periodicals of the present age can now make things, a story or description, much plainer by a picture or cut representing the things they wish to describe.

In like manner by seeing the persons perform what they understand by this "Conformity or Non-Conformity" which ever it is may make it plain. Yet I still can get but little satisfaction out of it, for I think I know what is meant by the things of this world, if that is what we must not conform to. But when those that say they know what the phrase means are taken as a picture or a cut it still leaves me altogether in the fog. For it is well known that those that lay most claim to this abridged scriptural clause, use about the same kind of horses, and put on the same kind of harness and hitch to about the same kind of plows as we worldlings do; and sow about the same time a year with the same kind of drills and other tools as the people of the world do. And when the wheat is ripe they use about the same kind of binders and put it on about the same kind of shocks, and haul it in about the same kind of barns, thresh their grain out with the same kind of machines, and haul it to market with about the same kind of wagons, and take the same prices in the same kind of money that the people of this wicked world do.

I have a book in my house; it is called minutes of A. M. and it has a good many questions answered. Thus see Rom. xii, 2. The reference reads, "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of their minds." Here the not conforming is positively limited to the "renewing of their minds." I have read this text many times and it does not seem so much mystified taking it in connection

with the reading before and after: but when we are cited to Rom. xii, 2, always in connection with the outward garment, we wonder where the renewing of the mind comes in. Well let a picture be drawn so that our eyes can look at it. Where did you get that plain coat, vest and hat from anyhow? Did you get that in heaven or is it the production of this world? "O that was the fashion of the world when our forefathers started out in this way of serving the Lord." And you Amish man, where did you get the hooks and eyes from? Did you get them from the Bible, or did an angel bring them down to you. "O no there was a time when all the world wore hooks and eyes." But is that conformity or non-conformity? "Well we Amish just continued wearing them and the world found out something better and commenced wearing buttons and in that way the world left us and we were no longer conforming to the world. When our forefathers lived the world was then much better than it is now; it is only the present sinful, wicked world that we must not conform to." The undersigned was at a communion lately and was very courteously treated and allowed a seat that commanded a good view. Long tables surrounded with brethren, and others surrounded with sisters all having white caps done up in the most fascinating style. It was a beautiful sight to behold. It looked angelic. One might have been struck with the folly of thinking that there was superlative pride connected with it; of course nothing but a vain heart would allow such an idea to enter it. The administrator was on hand and started by handing to the brethren a portion of bread and the one with the bread and the one to his side broke the bread between them and so did the next two brethren and so on. At the same time the administrator commenced with the sisters and broke a morsel off, and handed it to a sister, and so to every one at the table did he break the bread.

After the brethren had broken bread to one another and the administrator broke the bread to the sisters, the cup was in like manner handed a brother and he handed it to the next brother and so on around the table; and when

the sisters were reached the administrator reached the cup to a sister and after she had taken he held his hand out and she handed the cup back to him, after which he handed to the sister beside of her, and so on around the table, taking back the cup each time one had drunk. Although one table stood on the rostrum and the administrator had to step up and hand it clear across the table with difficulty, not one was allowed to hand the cup to the member beside of her, like the brethren did. Rules can be made at the present time and good rules at that; but they are always made by men and the present generation will not accept that man is now inspired, and therefore these man-made rules are of the world—"be not conformed to this world."

If Paul meant any other thing than wickedness, and the making of laws for God by uninspired men when he penned the sentence contained in Rom. xii, 2, then I am in the dark and practically do not know how to obey it. In the Good Book we read "My word is truth." No doubt the idea that Paul had was the true one. It is also written that one of old asked the Lord "What is truth?" A great statesman of the present age remarked that "It is often said that the truth is the simplest." That is so, after you understand the truth, but when you do not, a lie is far simpler. Turn to Rom. i, 25: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever, amen. There is danger that we make carelessly wrong constructions and applications of scriptures: if we make the way so wide that sin can go with us unhindered, we make it too wide. And when we make it so narrow that no one can get through without pushing others off, it is too narrow. There is much more danger on the side of intolerance, than on the side of charity. There is a large stock of differences in this world, religiously, baptism—backward, forward, single, triune, infant and no baptism, are all found to the satisfaction of somebody. Secret society no and yes are both found by somebody and somebody is certain that he or she is always on the right side, and the devil and all that differ with them on the wrong side.

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